

Assembly Bill No. 551

CHAPTER 677

An act to amend Sections 1775, 1776, and 1777.1 of the Labor Code, relating to public contracts.

[Approved by Governor October 9, 2011. Filed with
Secretary of State October 9, 2011.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 551, Campos. Public contracts: prevailing wage requirements: violations.

Existing law generally requires that not less than the general prevailing rate of per diem wages, as specified, be paid to workers employed on a public work, as defined. Existing law requires a contractor or subcontractor to submit, to the state or political subdivision on whose behalf a public work is being performed, a penalty of not more than \$50 per calendar day, and not less than \$10 per calendar day except in certain cases of a good faith mistake, as provided and determined by the Labor Commissioner, for violations of these prevailing wage provisions.

This bill would increase that maximum penalty to \$200 for each calendar day and would increase the minimum penalty except in certain cases of a good faith mistake to no less than \$40 for each calendar day. The bill would also increase the penalty assessed to contractors and subcontractors with prior violations from \$20 to \$80, and from \$30 to \$120 for willful violations.

Existing law requires each contractor and subcontractor performing work on a public work to keep accurate payroll records regarding his or her employees. Existing law requires that these records contain the information specified by the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, and provides that a contractor or subcontractor has 10 days in which to comply after receipt of a written notice requesting the records, or is subject to forfeiting a penalty of \$25 for each calendar day for each worker until strict compliance is effectuated.

This bill would increase the amount of that penalty to \$100 for each calendar day for each worker.

Under existing law, whenever a contractor or subcontractor performing a public works project is found by the Labor Commissioner to be in violation of certain provisions of law relating to payment of prevailing wages, with intent to defraud, or in willful violation of those provisions of law, the contractor or subcontractor or a firm, corporation, partnership, or association in which the contractor or subcontractor has a substantial interest is ineligible to bid on or to receive a public works contract for specified periods of time.

This bill would revise that provision to instead make a contractor or subcontractor on a public works project that is found to have committed 2

or more separate willful violations within a 3-year period ineligible for a period of up to 3 years to either bid on or be awarded a contract or perform work as a subcontractor of a public works project.

The bill would also require, whenever a contractor or subcontractor performing work on a public works project has failed to provide a timely response to a request by the Division of Apprenticeship Labor Standards Enforcement, the Division of Apprenticeship Standards, or the awarding body to produce certified payroll records, the Labor Commissioner to notify the contractor or subcontractor that he or she will be subject to debarment if the certified payroll records are not produced within 30 days after receipt of the written notice, and would make the contractor or subcontractor ineligible to bid on or be awarded a contract or perform work as a subcontractor on a public works project for a period of not less than one year and no more than three years, except as specified.

Existing law also requires the Labor Commissioner, not less than semiannually, to publish and distribute to awarding bodies a list of contractors who are ineligible to bid on or be awarded a public works contract, or to perform work as a subcontractor on a public works project.

This bill would instead require the Labor Commissioner to publish the list described above on the commissioner's Web site, to notify the Contractors' State License Board when the list is updated, and to at least annually notify awarding bodies of the availability of the list of debarred contractors, as specified.

This bill would incorporate additional changes in Section 1776 of the Labor Code, proposed by AB 766, to be operative only if AB 766 and this bill are both chaptered and become effective on or before January 1, 2012, and this bill is chaptered last.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 1775 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

1775. (a) (1) The contractor and any subcontractor under the contractor shall, as a penalty to the state or political subdivision on whose behalf the contract is made or awarded, forfeit not more than two hundred dollars (\$200) for each calendar day, or portion thereof, for each worker paid less than the prevailing wage rates as determined by the director for the work or craft in which the worker is employed for any public work done under the contract by the contractor or, except as provided in subdivision (b), by any subcontractor under the contractor.

(2) (A) The amount of the penalty shall be determined by the Labor Commissioner based on consideration of both of the following:

(i) Whether the failure of the contractor or subcontractor to pay the correct rate of per diem wages was a good faith mistake and, if so, the error was promptly and voluntarily corrected when brought to the attention of the contractor or subcontractor.

(ii) Whether the contractor or subcontractor has a prior record of failing to meet its prevailing wage obligations.

(B) (i) The penalty may not be less than forty dollars (\$40) for each calendar day, or portion thereof, for each worker paid less than the prevailing wage rate, unless the failure of the contractor or subcontractor to pay the correct rate of per diem wages was a good faith mistake and, if so, the error was promptly and voluntarily corrected when brought to the attention of the contractor or subcontractor.

(ii) The penalty may not be less than eighty dollars (\$80) for each calendar day, or portion thereof, for each worker paid less than the prevailing wage rate, if the contractor or subcontractor has been assessed penalties within the previous three years for failing to meet its prevailing wage obligations on a separate contract, unless those penalties were subsequently withdrawn or overturned.

(iii) The penalty may not be less than one hundred twenty dollars (\$120) for each calendar day, or portion thereof, for each worker paid less than the prevailing wage rate, if the Labor Commissioner determines that the violation was willful, as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 1777.1.

(C) If the amount due under this section is collected from the contractor or subcontractor, any outstanding wage claim under Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 1720) of Part 7 of Division 2 against that contractor or subcontractor shall be satisfied before applying that amount to the penalty imposed on that contractor or subcontractor pursuant to this section.

(D) The determination of the Labor Commissioner as to the amount of the penalty shall be reviewable only for abuse of discretion.

(E) The difference between the prevailing wage rates and the amount paid to each worker for each calendar day or portion thereof for which each worker was paid less than the prevailing wage rate shall be paid to each worker by the contractor or subcontractor, and the body awarding the contract shall cause to be inserted in the contract a stipulation that this section will be complied with.

(b) If a worker employed by a subcontractor on a public works project is not paid the general prevailing rate of per diem wages by the subcontractor, the prime contractor of the project is not liable for any penalties under subdivision (a) unless the prime contractor had knowledge of that failure of the subcontractor to pay the specified prevailing rate of wages to those workers or unless the prime contractor fails to comply with all of the following requirements:

(1) The contract executed between the contractor and the subcontractor for the performance of work on the public works project shall include a copy of the provisions of this section and Sections 1771, 1776, 1777.5, 1813, and 1815.

(2) The contractor shall monitor the payment of the specified general prevailing rate of per diem wages by the subcontractor to the employees, by periodic review of the certified payroll records of the subcontractor.

(3) Upon becoming aware of the failure of the subcontractor to pay his or her workers the specified prevailing rate of wages, the contractor shall

diligently take corrective action to halt or rectify the failure, including, but not limited to, retaining sufficient funds due the subcontractor for work performed on the public works project.

(4) Prior to making final payment to the subcontractor for work performed on the public works project, the contractor shall obtain an affidavit signed under penalty of perjury from the subcontractor that the subcontractor has paid the specified general prevailing rate of per diem wages to his or her employees on the public works project and any amounts due pursuant to Section 1813.

(c) The Division of Labor Standards Enforcement shall notify the contractor on a public works project within 15 days of the receipt by the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement of a complaint of the failure of a subcontractor on that public works project to pay workers the general prevailing rate of per diem wages.

SEC. 2. Section 1776 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

1776. (a) Each contractor and subcontractor shall keep accurate payroll records, showing the name, address, social security number, work classification, straight time and overtime hours worked each day and week, and the actual per diem wages paid to each journeyman, apprentice, worker, or other employee employed by him or her in connection with the public work. Each payroll record shall contain or be verified by a written declaration that it is made under penalty of perjury, stating both of the following:

(1) The information contained in the payroll record is true and correct.

(2) The employer has complied with the requirements of Sections 1771, 1811, and 1815 for any work performed by his or her employees on the public works project.

(b) The payroll records enumerated under subdivision (a) shall be certified and shall be available for inspection at all reasonable hours at the principal office of the contractor on the following basis:

(1) A certified copy of an employee's payroll record shall be made available for inspection or furnished to the employee or his or her authorized representative on request.

(2) A certified copy of all payroll records enumerated in subdivision (a) shall be made available for inspection or furnished upon request to a representative of the body awarding the contract, the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, and the Division of Apprenticeship Standards of the Department of Industrial Relations.

(3) A certified copy of all payroll records enumerated in subdivision (a) shall be made available upon request by the public for inspection or for copies thereof. However, a request by the public shall be made through either the body awarding the contract, the Division of Apprenticeship Standards, or the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement. If the requested payroll records have not been provided pursuant to paragraph (2), the requesting party shall, prior to being provided the records, reimburse the costs of preparation by the contractor, subcontractors, and the entity through which the request was made. The public may not be given access to the records at the principal office of the contractor.

(c) The certified payroll records shall be on forms provided by the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement or shall contain the same information as the forms provided by the division. The payroll records may consist of printouts of payroll data that are maintained as computer records, if the printouts contain the same information as the forms provided by the division and the printouts are verified in the manner specified in subdivision (a).

(d) A contractor or subcontractor shall file a certified copy of the records enumerated in subdivision (a) with the entity that requested the records within 10 days after receipt of a written request.

(e) Any copy of records made available for inspection as copies and furnished upon request to the public or any public agency by the awarding body, the Division of Apprenticeship Standards, or the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement shall be marked or obliterated to prevent disclosure of an individual's name, address, and social security number. The name and address of the contractor awarded the contract or the subcontractor performing the contract shall not be marked or obliterated. Any copy of records made available for inspection by, or furnished to, a joint labor-management committee established pursuant to the federal Labor Management Cooperation Act of 1978 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 175a) shall be marked or obliterated only to prevent disclosure of an individual's name and social security number. A joint labor management committee may maintain an action in a court of competent jurisdiction against an employer who fails to comply with Section 1774. The court may award restitution to an employee for unpaid wages and may award the joint labor management committee reasonable attorney's fees and costs incurred in maintaining the action. An action under this subdivision may not be based on the employer's misclassification of the craft of a worker on its certified payroll records. Nothing in this subdivision limits any other available remedies for a violation of this chapter.

(f) The contractor shall inform the body awarding the contract of the location of the records enumerated under subdivision (a), including the street address, city, and county, and shall, within five working days, provide a notice of a change of location and address.

(g) The contractor or subcontractor has 10 days in which to comply subsequent to receipt of a written notice requesting the records enumerated in subdivision (a). In the event that the contractor or subcontractor fails to comply within the 10-day period, he or she shall, as a penalty to the state or political subdivision on whose behalf the contract is made or awarded, forfeit one hundred dollars (\$100) for each calendar day, or portion thereof, for each worker, until strict compliance is effectuated. Upon the request of the Division of Apprenticeship Standards or the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, these penalties shall be withheld from progress payments then due. A contractor is not subject to a penalty assessment pursuant to this section due to the failure of a subcontractor to comply with this section.

(h) The body awarding the contract shall cause to be inserted in the contract stipulations to effectuate this section.

(i) The director shall adopt rules consistent with the California Public Records Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 6250) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code) and the Information Practices Act of 1977 (Title 1.8 (commencing with Section 1798) of Part 4 of Division 3 of the Civil Code) governing the release of these records, including the establishment of reasonable fees to be charged for reproducing copies of records required by this section.

SEC. 2.5. Section 1776 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

1776. (a) Each contractor and subcontractor shall keep accurate payroll records, showing the name, address, social security number, work classification, straight time and overtime hours worked each day and week, and the actual per diem wages paid to each journeyman, apprentice, worker, or other employee employed by him or her in connection with the public work. Each payroll record shall contain or be verified by a written declaration that it is made under penalty of perjury, stating both of the following:

(1) The information contained in the payroll record is true and correct.

(2) The employer has complied with the requirements of Sections 1771, 1811, and 1815 for any work performed by his or her employees on the public works project.

(b) The payroll records enumerated under subdivision (a) shall be certified and shall be available for inspection at all reasonable hours at the principal office of the contractor on the following basis:

(1) A certified copy of an employee's payroll record shall be made available for inspection or furnished to the employee or his or her authorized representative on request.

(2) A certified copy of all payroll records enumerated in subdivision (a) shall be made available for inspection or furnished upon request to a representative of the body awarding the contract, the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, and the Division of Apprenticeship Standards of the Department of Industrial Relations.

(3) A certified copy of all payroll records enumerated in subdivision (a) shall be made available upon request by the public for inspection or for copies thereof. However, a request by the public shall be made through either the body awarding the contract, the Division of Apprenticeship Standards, or the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement. If the requested payroll records have not been provided pursuant to paragraph (2), the requesting party shall, prior to being provided the records, reimburse the costs of preparation by the contractor, subcontractors, and the entity through which the request was made. The public may not be given access to the records at the principal office of the contractor.

(c) The certified payroll records shall be on forms provided by the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement or shall contain the same information as the forms provided by the division. The payroll records may consist of printouts of payroll data that are maintained as computer records, if the printouts contain the same information as the forms provided by the division and the printouts are verified in the manner specified in subdivision (a).

(d) A contractor or subcontractor shall file a certified copy of the records enumerated in subdivision (a) with the entity that requested the records within 10 days after receipt of a written request.

(e) Except as provided in subdivision (f), any copy of records made available for inspection as copies and furnished upon request to the public or any public agency by the awarding body, the Division of Apprenticeship Standards, or the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement shall be marked or obliterated to prevent disclosure of an individual's name, address, and social security number. The name and address of the contractor awarded the contract or the subcontractor performing the contract shall not be marked or obliterated. Any copy of records made available for inspection by, or furnished to, a joint labor-management committee established pursuant to the federal Labor Management Cooperation Act of 1978 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 175a) shall be marked or obliterated only to prevent disclosure of an individual's name and social security number. A joint labor management committee may maintain an action in a court of competent jurisdiction against an employer who fails to comply with Section 1774. The court may award restitution to an employee for unpaid wages and may award the joint labor management committee reasonable attorney's fees and costs incurred in maintaining the action. An action under this subdivision may not be based on the employer's misclassification of the craft of a worker on its certified payroll records. Nothing in this subdivision limits any other available remedies for a violation of this chapter.

(f) (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, agencies that are included in the Joint Enforcement Strike Force on the Underground Economy established pursuant to Section 329 of the Unemployment Insurance Code and other law enforcement agencies investigating violations of law shall, upon request, be provided nonredacted copies of certified payroll records. Any copies of records or certified payroll made available for inspection and furnished upon request to the public by an agency included in the Joint Enforcement Strike Force on the Underground Economy or to a law enforcement agency investigating a violation of law shall be marked or redacted to prevent disclosure of an individual's name, address, and social security number.

(2) An employer shall not be liable for damages in a civil action for any reasonable act or omission taken in good faith in compliance with this subdivision.

(g) The contractor shall inform the body awarding the contract of the location of the records enumerated under subdivision (a), including the street address, city, and county, and shall, within five working days, provide a notice of a change of location and address.

(h) The contractor or subcontractor has 10 days in which to comply subsequent to receipt of a written notice requesting the records enumerated in subdivision (a). In the event that the contractor or subcontractor fails to comply within the 10-day period, he or she shall, as a penalty to the state or political subdivision on whose behalf the contract is made or awarded, forfeit one hundred dollars (\$100) for each calendar day, or portion thereof,

for each worker, until strict compliance is effectuated. Upon the request of the Division of Apprenticeship Standards or the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, these penalties shall be withheld from progress payments then due. A contractor is not subject to a penalty assessment pursuant to this section due to the failure of a subcontractor to comply with this section.

(i) The body awarding the contract shall cause to be inserted in the contract stipulations to effectuate this section.

(j) The director shall adopt rules consistent with the California Public Records Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 6250) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code) and the Information Practices Act of 1977 (Title 1.8 (commencing with Section 1798) of Part 4 of Division 3 of the Civil Code) governing the release of these records, including the establishment of reasonable fees to be charged for reproducing copies of records required by this section.

SEC. 3. Section 1777.1 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

1777.1. (a) Whenever a contractor or subcontractor performing a public works project pursuant to this chapter is found by the Labor Commissioner to be in violation of this chapter with intent to defraud, except Section 1777.5, the contractor or subcontractor or a firm, corporation, partnership, or association in which the contractor or subcontractor has any interest is ineligible for a period of not less than one year or more than three years to do either of the following:

- (1) Bid on or be awarded a contract for a public works project.
- (2) Perform work as a subcontractor on a public works project.

(b) Whenever a contractor or subcontractor performing a public works project pursuant to this chapter is found by the Labor Commissioner to have committed two or more separate willful violations of this chapter, except Section 1777.5, within a three-year period, the contractor or subcontractor or a firm, corporation, partnership, or association in which the contractor or subcontractor has any interest is ineligible for a period up to three years to do either of the following:

- (1) Bid on or be awarded a contract for a public works project.
- (2) Perform work as a subcontractor on a public works project.

(c) Whenever a contractor or subcontractor performing a public works project has failed to provide a timely response to a request by the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, the Division of Apprenticeship Standards, or the awarding body to produce certified payroll records pursuant to Section 1776, the Labor Commissioner shall notify the contractor or subcontractor that, in addition to any other penalties provided by law, the contractor or subcontractor will be subject to debarment under this section if the certified payroll records are not produced within 30 days after receipt of the written notice. If the commissioner finds that the contractor or subcontractor has failed to comply with Section 1776 by that deadline, unless the commissioner finds that the failure to comply was due to circumstances outside the contractor's or subcontractor's control, the contractor or subcontractor or a firm, corporation, partnership, or association in which the contractor or

subcontractor has any interest is ineligible for a period of not less than one year and not more than three years to do either of the following:

- (1) Bid on or be awarded a contract for a public works project.
- (2) Perform work as a subcontractor on a public works project.

(d) A willful violation occurs when the contractor or subcontractor knew or reasonably should have known of his or her obligations under the public works law and deliberately fails or refuses to comply with its provisions.

(e) The Labor Commissioner shall publish on the commissioner's Internet Web site a list of contractors who are ineligible to bid on or be awarded a public works contract, or to perform work as a subcontractor on a public works project pursuant to this chapter. The list shall contain the name of the contractor, the Contractors' State License Board license number of the contractor, and the effective period of debarment of the contractor. Contractors shall be added to the list upon issuance of a debarment order and the commissioner shall also notify the Contractors' State License Board when the list is updated. At least annually, the commissioner shall notify awarding bodies of the availability of the list of debarred contractors. The commissioner shall also place advertisements in construction industry publications targeted to the contractors and subcontractors, chosen by the commissioner, that state the effective period of the debarment and the reason for debarment. The advertisements shall appear one time for each debarment of a contractor in each publication chosen by the commissioner. The debarred contractor or subcontractor shall be liable to the commissioner for the reasonable cost of the advertisements, not to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000). The amount paid to the commissioner for the advertisements shall be credited against the contractor's or subcontractor's obligation to pay civil fines or penalties for the same willful violation of this chapter.

(f) For purposes of this section, "contractor or subcontractor" means a firm, corporation, partnership, or association and its responsible managing officer, as well as any supervisors, managers, and officers found by the Labor Commissioner to be personally and substantially responsible for the willful violation of this chapter.

(g) For the purposes of this section, the term "any interest" means an interest in the entity bidding or performing work on the public works project, whether as an owner, partner, officer, manager, employee, agent, consultant, or representative. "Any interest" includes, but is not limited to, all instances where the debarred contractor or subcontractor receives payments, whether cash or any other form of compensation, from any entity bidding or performing work on the public works project, or enters into any contracts or agreements with the entity bidding or performing work on the public works project for services performed or to be performed for contracts that have been or will be assigned or sublet, or for vehicles, tools, equipment, or supplies that have been or will be sold, rented, or leased during the period from the initiation of the debarment proceedings until the end of the term of the debarment period. "Any interest" does not include shares held in a publicly traded corporation if the shares were not received as compensation

after the initiation of debarment from an entity bidding or performing work on a public works project.

(h) For the purposes of this section, the term “entity” is defined as a company, limited liability company, association, partnership, sole proprietorship, limited liability partnership, corporation, business trust, or organization.

(i) The Labor Commissioner shall adopt rules and regulations for the administration and enforcement of this section.

SEC. 4. Section 2.5 of this bill incorporates amendments to Section 1776 of the Labor Code proposed by both this bill and Assembly Bill 766. It shall only become operative if (1) both bills are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 2012, (2) each bill amends Section 1776 of the Labor Code, and (3) this bill is enacted after Assembly Bill 766, in which case Section 2 of this bill shall not become operative.